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AUTHOR Wood, Stephen C.
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ABSTRACT

Three studies were conducted under a mandate from the Board of Trustees to develop criteria for the evaluation of community services in the Los Angeles Community College District. The first study used questionnaires and interviews to determine the perceptions of college presidents, community services administrators, faculty senate presidents, and student body presidents of the functions and effectiveness of community services. Respondents placed high priority upon cooperation with community agencies, community use of facilities, and reaching all socio-economic populations. A survey to determine characteristics of students enrolled in community services non-credit classes indicated that the majority were female (74%), most found the location of the classes to be convenient (92%), and most were not enrolled in regular college courses (82%) or adult education courses (91%). A telephone survey solicited the views of 1676 community residents on community services course offerings. Educational services to the socially disadvantaged, courses geared toward job advancement, classes on health and nutrition, and counseling for mature women returning to college were felt to be "very important". On the basis of these studies, the following criteria, among others, were recommended: community services courses should promote intellectual and social life; class fees should be based on actual costs; and the need for the course and its intended audience should be determined. (MB)

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LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

CRITERIA FOR

COMMUNITY SERVICES NON-CREDIT CLASSES:

A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Stephen C. Wood
Staff Aide

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DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Office of College Relations and Community Services
Ray Johnson, Director

JC 780 522

Abstract

This report responds to a motion passed by the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District asking that criteria be developed for the evaluation of Community Services classes.

The report delineates the parameters of Community Services as stated in the Board Rules and then summarizes the methods and results of three studies conducted by the Office of College Relations and Community Services. These studies assess: 1.) perceptions of the role of Community Services programs of different members of the college community -- the College President, the Community Services Administration, the faculty senate president, and the student body president; 2.) the profile characteristics of persons who are presently enrolled in a Community Services class; and 3.) the degree of importance the general public places on various kinds of community services course offerings.

A summary of findings is presented, followed by recommended criteria for evaluating Community Services classes.

I. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

On August 2, 1976, a motion was passed by the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District to conduct a review of community services subjects upon completion of a community services needs assessment study. This report responds to that motion by summarizing the findings of three studies pertaining to community services and recommends several specific criteria for evaluation of non-credit community services classes.

II. BACKGROUND

BOARD RULES

Chapter XII of the Board Rules delineates the parameters of Community Services programs in the Los Angeles Community College District.

1. Rule 12001 defines Community Services as those "comprehensive educational, cultural, recreational, civic center, and community planning programs which a community college may provide for its community over and beyond regularly scheduled day and evening classes."

2. Rule 12003:13 states "Non-Credit Short-Term Classes may be established as part of the Community Services program. Fees may be assessed to make the classes partially or entirely self-supporting."

3. Rules 12001.10, 12001.11, and 12002.10 suggest that non-credit classes should:

   > contribute to and promote the cultural, intellectual, and social life of the College District community and the development of skills for the profitable use of leisure time (12001.10), or
   >
   > provide educational services designed to meet the needs of community groups and the College District community at large (12001.11), and
   >
   > be conducted primarily for the college age community or older; however, exceptions may be made... (12002.10).

4. Rule 12004 states, "Reasonable fees may be charged for Community Services activities and/or classes. Fees when charged may vary for the same activity and/or class from college to college, depending upon the economic status of the community."

5. Rule 2309.10 waives all college fees, including fees for Community Services programs for senior citizens or retired persons. "(A senior citizen or retired person is defined as a citizen who is 60 years of age or older and retired.)"

COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES

Three studies conducted in the area of Community Services provide information relevant to the development of evaluative criteria. Further elucidated in Sections III, IV, and V, the three are:

1. An Inventory Concerning Perceptions of Community Services

2. Profile Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Community Services Classes, Spring 1976

3. A Community Telephone Survey.

III. AN INVENTORY CONCERNING PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The purpose of the study was to assess the perceptions of Community Services programs of different members of the college community -- the College President, the Community Services administrator, the faculty senate president, and the student body president.

The study was accomplished through administration of a questionnaire and conducting interviews. The questionnaire asked for degree of agreement or indication of importance concerning statements related to four facets of Community Services--the nature, purpose, and functions of the community college, the key elements of community services, community needs, and community involvement.

The interviews, conducted by District Community Services staff, elicited the perceptions of the interviewee about what Community Services is, what it does, and what it should be. Specific questions related to the individual's previous contact with Community Services, suggested techniques for obtaining input for program development, the present and emerging role of Community Services, adequacy of resources, and effectiveness in meeting college and community needs.

The statement which engendered the most agreement among all those responding to the questionnaire was that Community Services should serve all socio-economic segments of the community. The top four key elements of Community Services, according to the survey respondents, are:

1) cooperation with community agencies and groups,
2) community use of college facilities,
3) service to adults, and
4) cultural programs.

Service to senior citizens and continuing education for women were also rated as highly important, receiving overall rankings of sixth and eighth, respectively.

In defining community needs, the four statements rated most important were:

1) increased opportunities for cultural activities,
2) increasing response to needs of senior citizens,
3) increasing opportunities for mature women,
4) increasing opportunities for adults and out-of-school youth.

Finally, in the area of community involvement, cooperation with senior citizens service agencies was deemed most important by those queried.

The most generally agreed upon outcomes of the interviews were the following:

1) Community Services programs should be of higher priority in the future.
2) Community Services provides an important link between the college and the community; its role should be one of leadership and expansion.
3) The District should assess the community and the college for delineation of areas of interest; a more structured system is needed for obtaining community input.

In summary, respondents felt Community Services to be an important area of community college endeavor. They gave high priority to services for senior citizens and to reaching all socio-economic segments of the community. They deemed the program to be an important vehicle for timely response to shifting community needs.

IV. PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COMMUNITY SERVICES CLASSES, SPRING 1976

A survey of students enrolled in Community Services non-credit classes was administered in spring semester 1976. The report generated from this survey presents a profile of the characteristics of persons who are presently participating in the Community Services program. The questionnaire covered nineteen variables, from which a detailed data base has emerged. Important components of this profile are:

1) the vast majority of students are female (73.7%),
2) the location where classes are offered is convenient (92.0%), and
3) that most Community Services students are not enrolled in regular college courses (82%) or adult education courses (91.1%).

Other variables such as marital status, age, income, ethnicity, education, and employment situation show a wide mix of responses throughout the District. Variation from campus to campus is pronounced; the details can be found in the copy of the study forwarded with this report.

V. TELEPHONE SURVEY

A telephone survey of the communities within the District was conducted from the District Office in October, 1976. The number and location of calls was determined by a street breakdown within census tracts, thus assuring an equitable "spread" of responses throughout the District. Utilizing student workers over a three-week period, 1676 citizens were interviewed and answered when asked the degree of importance they placed on various kinds of community services course offerings.

The following are general categories of educational services and the percentage of respondents who indicated that they felt the category was "very important."

Category	Percentage
Educational services to socially disadvantaged persons	70.3%
Courses or workshops geared toward job advancement	62.2%
Classes dealing with health and nutrition	58.3%
Counseling and educational services to mature women who want to continue or return to college	55.2%
Neighborhood centers that make classes readily accessible to the community	55.2%
Classes for senior citizens	54.7%
Classes dealing with consumer problems and consumer education	54.3%
Classes for individual or personal development	51.4%
Recreation courses that use the sports facilities of the college	42.3%
Classes for special interests of individuals	41.3%

This survey gives an idea as to what areas the general public places greatest interest and where it perceives the greatest need.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The College District's Community Services Program serves a heterogeneous population. The principal implication of this is that Community Services be evaluated primarily on the basis of campus service area needs, not district-wide needs. As can be seen on the map designated as Exhibit I - Service Areas Based on Enrollments in Community Services Classes, the utilization of Community Services classes varies significantly from region to region within the District. These variations

pose these fundamental questions:

1) How can unserved and less well served population areas be more fully integrated into the Community Services Program?
2) Which campus(es) can best serve a particular area?

While the intent of the Board Rules sets general policy, it can be argued that almost any class fits within the definitions as stated in the articles (i.e. what is cultural?, social?, etc.). As an evaluative mechanism they lend tone, but lack specificity. As guidelines they provide a broad framework within which criteria need to be established.

VII. RECOMMENDED CRITERIA

Based on both the mandate for Community Services found in the Board Rules and the findings of the three studies, the following criteria are submitted:

1. The class contributes to and promotes the cultural, intellectual, and social life of the college service area and/or develops skills for the profitable use of leisure time.

2. Need for the class has been established within the local community and the level of anticipated enrollments warrants its being offered.

3. The population to which the class is being offered has been identified, i.e., to the community in general, a special target group, or a special interest group.

4. The class is being offered so as to afford equality of accessibility and opportunity to all residents in the college service area.

5. The class responds to an indentified community need not being met by a course offered in the regular instructional program, and a comparable class is not available in the District within a reasonable commuting distance.

6. Justification for the class is supported by a course outline describing the following:
   a. Objectives of the class
   b. Class content
   c. Method of instruction
   d. Total class hours
   e. Fee for class, if any.

7. Adequate facilities, qualified personnel, and essential support services are available for the activity.

8. The class fee, if any, is based only upon the actual cost of offering the class.

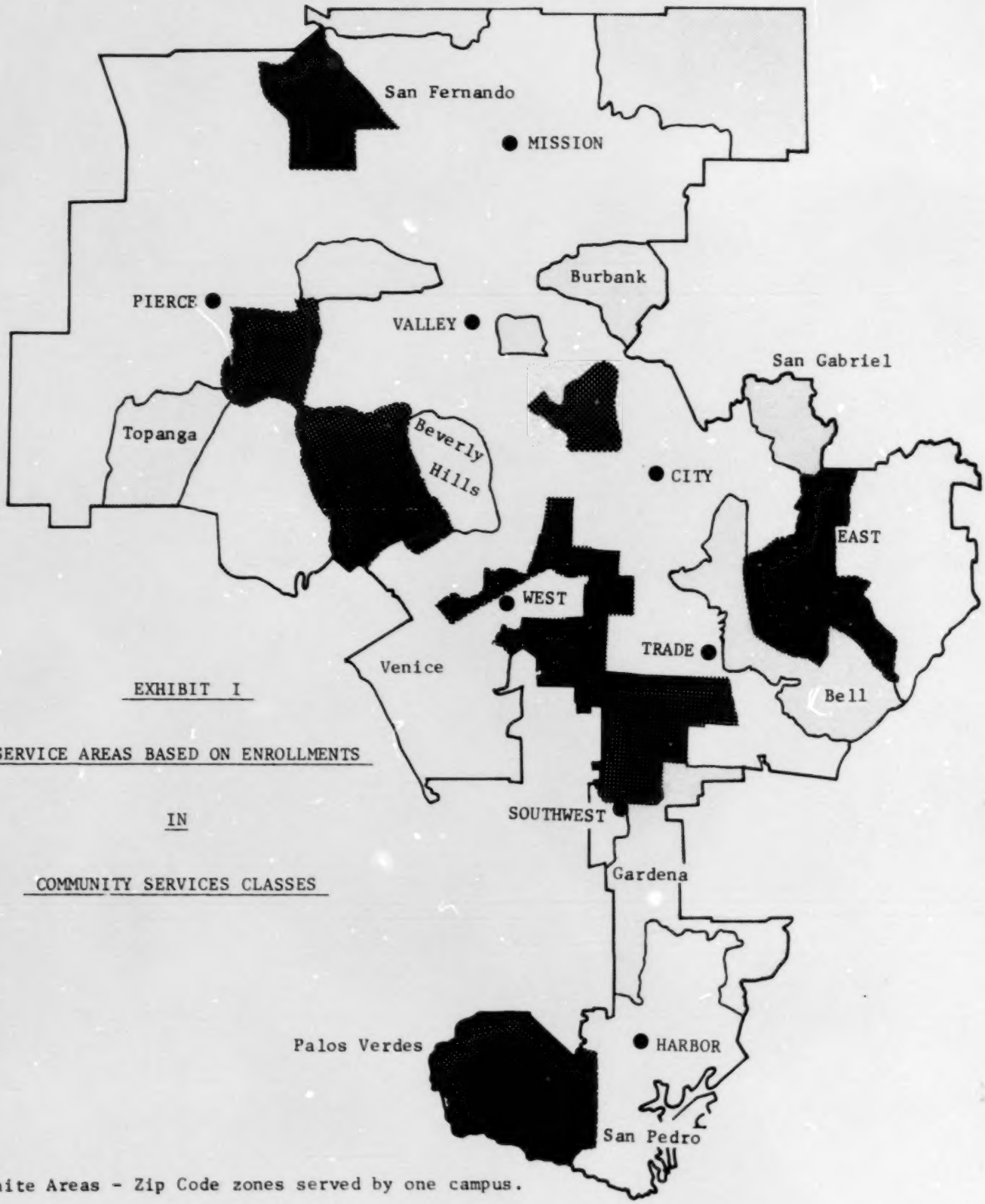

EXHIBIT I

SERVICE AREAS BASED ON ENROLLMENTS

IN

COMMUNITY SERVICES CLASSES

White Areas - Zip Code zones served by one campus.

Dark Areas - Zip Code zones served by more than one campus.

Lightly Shaded Areas - Those Zip Code zones not served by any campus.